GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
ATOMIC ENERGY
LOK SABHA

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:328
ANSWERED ON:22.07.2015
Rare Beach Sand Minerals
Patel Shri Prahlad Singh

Will the Minister of ATOMIC ENERGY be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Indian Rare Earths Limited (IREL) is a big partner in enhancing atomic energy;

(b) if so, whether the Government is aware of the above organisation"s lease related dispute in Tamil Nadu and if so, the details thereof and the action taken in this regard;

(c) the details of the rare beach sand minerals mined by IREL which are useful for atomic energy;

(d) whether the Government is satisfied with the working of IREL and if not, the reasons therefor and the steps taken in this regard; and

(e)the details of the various parts of the country where rare minerals are found?

Answer

THE MINISTER OF STATE FOR PERSONNEL, PUBLIC GRIEVANCES & PENSIONS AND PRIME MINISTER'S OFFICE (Dr. JITENDRA SINGH) :

(a) Yes, Sir.

(b) Yes, Sir. The various difficulties faced by Indian Rare Earths Limited (IREL) in its plant at Manavalakurichi in Tamil Nadu include non-renewal of mining leases by the State Government over the issue of surface right, non-issue of fresh Mining Lease (ML) against application of Indian Rare Earths Limited, difficulties in obtaining environmental clearances for the existing operations of IREL in Tamil Nadu, etc. Department of Atomic Energy is continuously taking necessary actions for early resolution of the issues with the Government of Tamil Nadu.

(c) Beach sand minerals are a suite of seven minerals viz. ilmenite, rutile, leucoxene - titanium bearing minerals, zircon − a zirconium bearing mineral, sillimanite − a silicate of aluminium, garnet - iron-aluminium silicate, and monazite which is a phosphatic mineral of thorium, uranium and rare earths. Of the above, monazite is the only commercial source of rare earths in India. Monazite also contains thorium & uranium which are prescribed substances as per the Atomic Energy Act 1962 and are useful for atomic energy.

(d) Yes, Sir.

(e) The mineral monazite occurs associated with other heavy minerals in the beach sand deposits along the coastal tracts, is the major resource for rare earths in India. Atomic Minerals Directorate for Exploration and Research (AMD), a constituent unit under the Department of Atomic Energy, has estimated the presence of 11.93 million tonnes of monazite resources in the beach sand mineral placer deposits along the coastal tracts of India. Monazite in general, contains about 55 − 60% total Rare Earth Oxide. The state-wise resources of in-situ monazite established by AMD as on June 2015 are as follows:

State	Monazite (Million tonne)
Odisha	2.41
Andhra Pradesh	3.72
Tamil Nadu	2.46
Kerala	1.90
West Bengal	1.22
Jharkhand	0.22
Total	11.93